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REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND ON THE WORK OF ITS FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF 1996

(22-25 January 1996)*

* The present document is a mimeographed version of the report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on its first regular session (22-25 January 1996). The reports on the second regular session (9-12 April 1996), annual session (17-21 June 1996) and third regular session (16-20 September 1996) will be issued as parts II, III and IV, respectively. The reports will be combined and issued in final form as Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1996, Supplement No. 12 (E/1996/32/Rev.1-E/ICEF/1996/12/Rev.1).

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I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Election of the officers of the Board for 1996

1. The officers of the Executive Board for the year 1996 were elected as follows:

President: H.E. Ambassador Ion Gorita (Romania)

Vice-Presidents: Ms. Lyda Aponte de Zacklin (Venezuela)
Mr. Jan Top Christensen (Denmark)
Mr. John Aggrey (Ghana)
Mrs. Mitra Vasisht (India)

B. Statements by the President and the Executive Director

2. The President said that it was especially significant that Romania assumed the Presidency of the Executive Board in 1996 because it was in Eastern Europe that UNICEF began its vital work on behalf of children and women some 50 years ago in the wake of the Second World War. Since then, spurred on by UNICEF, the countries of the world had made great strides to ensure the survival, protection and development of their children. The mid-decade review of progress towards the goals for the year 2000 set by the World Summit for Children, scheduled for 1996, would provide ample evidence of progress made in many areas. However, much more remained to be done. According to the "anti-war agenda" championed by UNICEF in the State of the World's Children 1996 report, a staggering number of children today were victims of conflict. Those children must be the priority of UNICEF as it commemorated the past and planned for the future. On the work of the Board, he particularly emphasized the need for streamlining and rationalizing the volume and content of the documentation.

3. The Executive Director said that throughout the fiftieth anniversary year, UNICEF would be joining with a broad range of partners to commemorate the milestone. However, celebrating past achievements did not mean looking backwards. Rather, UNICEF would draw on the lessons of the past to meet the challenges of the present and move to the future. Anniversary activities had begun with the launch in December 1995 of the State of the World's Children 1996 report. The report highlighted the terrible symmetry at either end of the span of the existence of UNICEF. Founded in the aftermath of the Second World War, UNICEF again was faced with the challenge of meeting children's needs in the proliferating conflicts of the post-Cold War era, in addition to the larger silent emergencies caused by poverty and underdevelopment. The proposals of the anti-war agenda would make a difference only to the degree to which they would be acted upon. So UNICEF was taking action. To enforce the call for a ban on anti-personnel mines, UNICEF recently had announced that it would not do business with companies that produced land-mines. Work to advance the anti-war agenda would prepare the ground for the important United Nations study on the impact of armed conflict on children being prepared under the leadership of Graça Machel for presentation to the General Assembly next fall. It must become unthinkable that children be denied humanitarian assistance or be considered legitimate targets in times of war. Children themselves must be helped to become agents of peace and tolerance.

4. The year 1996 was also the mid-point in the 10-year effort to achieve the goals set at the World Summit for Children. The mid-decade review called for in

the Plan of Action would take place in September at the United Nations, when the Secretary-General would present a progress report to the General Assembly. UNICEF was in the process of gathering data on the mid-decade goals, and countries would soon be asked to hold their own mid-decade reviews. Global and national mid-decade reviews of progress should not only tally what has and what has not been accomplished, but also should provide lessons for tackling the goals for the year 2000. Some of those goals were complex, and achieving them would require innovative thinking and bold solutions. The updated policies and strategies adopted by the Executive Board in recent years would be an important contribution to this effort.

C. Adoption of the agenda

5. The agenda of the session, as contained in document E/ICEF/1996/2, was adopted as amended orally. The agenda contained the following items:

Item 1: Opening of the session:

(a) Election of the officers of the Board for 1996

(b) Statements by the President and the Executive Director

Item 2: Adoption of the provisional agenda and timetable and organization of work

Item 3: Follow-up to management reform

UNICEF mission statement

Item 4: UNICEF emergency operations

Item 5: Country notes:

(a) Africa

(b) Americas and the Caribbean

(c) Asia

(d) Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States

(e) Middle East and North Africa

Item 6: Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women

Item 7: The fiftieth anniversary of UNICEF

Item 8: Follow-up to decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council

Item 9: Other matters

Item 10: Closing of the session: remarks by the Executive Director and the President

6. Prior to the adoption of the agenda, one delegation reported on progress made in her country with regard to children's development, including measures to combat child labour. However, her Government was concerned about the situation of children the world over, especially the use of children as prostitutes. UNICEF should focus on halting such practices in developed and developing countries. UNICEF also should focus on children as agents of change and learn from children themselves. In a time of diminishing resources, achieving these and other goals for children would be difficult for many countries, including her own. She asked the Executive Director to focus attention on the issue of resources, as the assistance and cooperation of UNICEF were vital to efforts for children.

7. Several delegations proposed that an informal discussion of the country notes be held in addition to the formal debate by the Executive Board, to allow for discussions with field representatives and regional directors. Another delegation said that the Executive Board should exercise some caution and not detract from the substantive discussion of the country notes. It was important that informal meetings not take place simultaneously with Board meetings to allow for full participation. The Executive Director said that the regional directors would be available for informal consultations with delegations and would be able to share information on consultations held at the country level.

8. One speaker said that the country notes were titled "country programme strategy notes", although according to General Assembly resolutions, strategy notes were not supposed to be discussed by the governing bodies of funds and programmes, but only taken note of by them. Another delegation, supported by others, agreed with the question raised on the nomenclature of the documents. If they were referred to as "country strategy notes", no discussions were permitted because the relevant General Assembly resolution stated that such documents were for reference purposes only. However, the speaker was not aware of any decision by the Executive Board to refer to "country programme strategy notes", and could accept a reference to "country programmes", which could be discussed by the Board, with relevant inputs to be incorporated into the final country programme recommendations (CPRs). It also was stated that the country programmes had been negotiated with Governments and it would not be appropriate for the Executive Board to have substantive debates on them. A delegation added that according to Executive Board decision 1995/8 (E/ICEF/1995/9/Rev.1), the Board had an opportunity to provide input to the ongoing country programme preparation process through its comments on the country notes. The Executive Director suggested that the documents be referred to as "country notes" to avoid confusion with the "country strategy notes" referred to in General Assembly resolution 47/199 of 22 December 1992 and 50/120 of 13 December 1995. The secretariat would issue a corrigendum to that effect, if the Board found it useful. 1/

9. In accordance with rule 50.2 and the annex of the Rules of Procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced the observer delegations that had submitted credentials for the session and had advised the secretariat of the agenda items in which they had a special interest. They were (with the agenda items indicated, if any, shown in parentheses): Albania; Algeria; Argentina; Armenia (3, 4, 5, 8); Australia; Austria; Bangladesh (all); Belarus; Belgium; Benin (all); Bolivia; Bosnia and Herzegovina (4); Costa Rica; Côte d'Ivoire (5); Croatia; Czech Republic; Djibouti; Egypt; El Salvador; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Finland; Gabon; Germany (all); Guatemala; Guinea; Guyana; Haiti; Holy See (all); Hungary; Iraq (5 (e)); Ireland (all); Israel; Kazakstan (all); Kyrgyzstan;

1/ Subsequently issued as document E/ICEF/1996/P/L.41.

Latvia (all); Lithuania; Malawi; Mali; Malta (all); Mexico (all); Mongolia (5 (c)); Nepal (all); Nicaragua; Nigeria; Oman; Panama; Philippines; Poland (all); Portugal; Republic of Moldova; Senegal; Slovenia; South Africa (all); Spain; Sri Lanka (5 (c)); Sudan; Tajikistan; Togo; Tunisia; United Republic of Tanzania; Uruguay; and Zimbabwe.

10. In addition, Palestine (5 (e)) had submitted credentials, as had the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); the United Nations Office at Vienna (Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division); the World Health Organization (WHO); and l'Agence de coopération culturelle et technique (Cultural and Technical Cooperation Agency). A number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also had submitted credentials: Anglican Communion; Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University; Commonwealth Medical Association; International Catholic Child Bureau; International Committee of the Red Cross; International Council on Social Welfare; International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres; International Federation of University Women; International Movement ATD Fourth World; International Social Service; La Leche League International; Pathways to Peace; Pax Christi International; Rehabilitation International; Viet Nam Committee for Protection and Care of Children; World Information Transfer; and World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations.

II. DELIBERATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

A. Follow-up to management reform and the UNICEF mission statement

Progress report on the management excellence programme in UNICEF

11. The Executive Board had before it a progress report on the management excellence programme in UNICEF (E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.3), which was introduced by the Executive Director.

12. Many delegations expressed appreciation for the report and its clear presentation of the link between the management excellence activities and the recommendations made by the original study done by Booz Allen & Hamilton. It was suggested that the matrix included in the progress report provide information on action taken and results achieved, specifying decisions to be made by the Executive Board or the secretariat. The secretariat said that specifying responsibility for decision-making would be difficult until the nature of specific recommendations had been determined. Many speakers welcomed the approach being taken by the secretariat and said that they looked forward to the recommendations of the project teams. Several speakers also noted the savings made in the overall budget for these activities.

13. Delegations expressed appreciation for the priority given to ensuring Executive Board involvement in the management excellence process and the use of inter-sessional meetings as a means of keeping the Board informed and of providing opportunities for the Board to provide guidance and direction. One speaker said that the inter-sessional meetings should be limited to providing information on progress rather than as a forum for substantive consultation. The speaker also suggested that informal but substantive discussions should be arranged before project recommendations were presented at formal Executive Board sessions and that a working group should be established to study the recommendations. Other delegations said that inter-sessional meetings should not be for decision-making, but that exchanges of view were necessary. One speaker said that the inter-sessional meetings should enable the Board to provide guidance on issues and cited the positive results of similar meetings in the development of the mission statement. Other delegations said that the Board should be sensitive to the balance between following progress in a responsible way and avoiding interfering in the secretariat's work, especially in the intermediate phase when recommendations were being developed. The Executive Director highlighted the importance of receiving feedback and guidance on issues, as in the case of the mission statement, and said that she saw inter-sessional meetings as an opportunity to provide information and to allow opportunities for comment by Board members on the secretariat's work as preparation for formal Board sessions.

14. Delegations requested that an inter-sessional meeting be held sometime after the January meeting of the Steering Committee and suggested that staff representatives participate in discussions of the process of consultations with staff. The secretariat agreed. Several speakers endorsed the participatory process and others expressed appreciation to the UNICEF staff who were contributing to this process and carrying out their normal duties at the same time. A number of speakers stressed that staff participation and involvement in the management excellence efforts were important for ownership of the process. One delegation suggested that the advisory councils should become more formal and structured. Another speaker stressed the importance of information reaching

National Officers. The secretariat expressed a strong commitment to staff participation as a necessary requirement for better implementation, enhanced staff morale and ownership of the process. Heads of all UNICEF offices had been urged to participate in strengthening management excellence by making improvements in their own offices.

15. Speakers referred to the need for enhanced consultation with Governments, and some said the project team on Effective Field Management was especially relevant. Some speakers cited interviews with Executive Board members by the team examining relations with National Committees for UNICEF as a good example.

16. Some delegations said that UNICEF management excellence efforts should take into account reform activities being undertaken by other United Nations bodies. One delegation cited harmonization of budgets and joint reporting as examples of ways to stimulate cooperation among and coordination between agencies. The Executive Director stressed that UNICEF was working to be efficient within the context of the United Nations system.

17. A few speakers raised specific questions regarding the external consultancies on financial management systems, information resource management (IRM) and supply activities. The Executive Director said that all recommendations would be shared with the Executive Board and that internal reviews of the recommendations were to ensure value for money. Specifically, terms of reference for the study on the profitability of greeting card and product sales would include determining comparability between countries; the supply study would address quality assurance; the IRM study was examining performance results and how they are used in programmes; and the study on financial management systems would take into account financial systems of other agencies.

18. To concerns raised about the linkages between the various project teams, the secretariat said that coordination was assured through the Management Task Force and regular meetings of team leaders.

19. A few speakers, together with the secretariat, emphasized the growing role and importance of National Committees for UNICEF. One delegation said that issues emerging from the project team examining relations with National Committees, such as new typologies for a UNICEF presence in countries, might require guidance by the Executive Board. Another speaker said that the project team looking at relations with intergovernmental organizations and NGOs should take into account that UNICEF needed to work closely with NGOs and that the design of country programmes should include their views.

20. One speaker asked about the status of the working group established to examine relations between the Executive Board and the secretariat being headed by the Deputy Executive Director, External Relations. The secretariat said that the working group had met with the Bureau on 19 December 1995 and sought guidance on how to proceed. Through their regional groups, Board members were to discuss the matter and a meeting of the working group with the new Bureau would be arranged shortly.

UNICEF mission statement

21. The Executive Board had before it a proposal for a UNICEF mission statement (E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.2), which was introduced by the Executive Director. Almost all delegations expressed appreciation for the open and participatory process

used to develop the mission statement, including inter-sessional meetings of the Executive Board.

22. Various delegations suggested amendments to the proposed text and some suggested that a drafting session be held to that end. One delegation in particular hesitated to support the draft for a number of reasons. First, there was confusion in the draft as to the ultimate mission of UNICEF and the mandate it had been given to carry out. The mission of UNICEF was to promote the well-being of children the world over and, in particular, in developing countries. With regard to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the protection of children's rights was extremely important in promoting their general welfare, and the delegation supported the advocacy role of UNICEF in that area. However, defending the rights of children was for UNICEF the means, and promoting their welfare the central mission. In addition, UNICEF should be promoting children's welfare through the empowerment of women.

23. Summarizing the discussion, the President said that the mission statement would continue to be discussed and that there would be opportunities for adaptation in the future. The Executive Board agreed to adopt the mission statement as presented by the Executive Director, without amendment.

24. The Executive Director thanked the Board and assured members that the secretariat's immediate priority would be to disseminate and popularize the UNICEF mission globally. She added that in adopting the mission statement at the first session of 1996, the fiftieth anniversary year of UNICEF, the Board had sent a strong message of support and consensus on the core of the work of the organization. (See chap. III, decision 1996/1, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

B. UNICEF emergency operations

25. The Executive Board had before it a report on UNICEF emergency services: mission and strategies (E/ICEF/1996/4) and a report on UNICEF emergency operations in 1995 (E/ICEF/1996/7). The Executive Director made some introductory remarks, which were followed by a statement by a representative of the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA). A representative of the World Food Programme (WFP) also addressed the Executive Board. The Director of the UNICEF Office of Emergency Programmes made an in-depth presentation of the two reports before the Board.

26. In general, delegations expressed support for the secretariat's efforts in producing the report on the UNICEF emergency mission and strategies. However, speakers raised several issues, including the need for further clarification of the continuum from relief to development; local capacity-building to enhance cost-effectiveness; coordination with DHA, other United Nations agencies and the donor community; and more effective mechanisms to avert crises.

27. Some delegations supported the developmental approach taken in dealing with emergencies, saying that sustained development was essential to preventing these emergencies. Other delegations recommended the development of strong linkages between relief and development activities. This "gray area" needed more comprehensive analysis and the development of a transitional mechanism. One speaker said that UNICEF should maintain the delicate balance in the allocation of resources between relief and development. Other speakers said that the use of local consultants and organizations for capacity-building would lead to a better allocation of resources and support the developmental process.

28. In response, the secretariat stressed the importance of a decentralized field-based structure. On the question of maintaining a balance between relief and development, there was a need for action during a crisis while maintaining a recovery perspective. The process of strengthening the UNICEF emergency response capacity was not taking place in isolation from mainstream activities.

29. Many delegations commended the work undertaken by UNICEF in emergencies and welcomed the organization's timely response. One speaker said that in addition to emergency interventions, UNICEF should continue working in post-conflict recovery and reconstruction activities. Other delegations asked what constituted an emergency and requested further clarification on this subject. UNICEF was urged to respond to all kinds of emergencies, including "silent" emergencies that affected large numbers of children throughout the world and "forgotten" emergencies, i.e., those that failed to capture newspaper headlines. One speaker asked what strategies were being employed for the "silent" emergency of AIDS orphans in Africa, and another speaker wanted UNICEF to continue to provide assistance to women and children affected by natural disasters. Some delegations spoke of the detrimental effects of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and thanked UNICEF for the assistance provided to address the problem.

30. Some delegations suggested that preventive actions were extremely important during "silent" emergencies in preventing them from becoming more catastrophic "loud" emergencies. There were various suggestions for preventive actions, including stand-by arrangements and greater emphasis on strategies for sustainable development.

31. Several delegations stressed the need to strengthen coordination mechanisms with DHA, other United Nations agencies, the donor community and NGOs. Some speakers said that UNICEF should cooperate with national Governments in setting up response mechanisms. Delegations also asked about UNICEF cooperation with partners and how its contribution to humanitarian operations strengthened the overall response to emergencies. The need for a process of assessment of lessons learned was cited by many delegations. One speaker said that assessments should be made of the contribution of UNICEF cooperation with its partners and within the United Nations system.

32. One delegation urged UNICEF to strengthen the capacity of its staff and partners to respond in times of crisis. Other delegations encouraged the increased use of local consultants as being both cost-effective and contributing to capacity-building. It was suggested that the Emergency Programme Fund be used to enhance regional capacities. The secretariat said that UNICEF recognized the need for increased local capacity-building and stressed strengthening partnerships with and providing support to local NGOs, national Governments and local communities, while also working at the family level.

33. A speaker said that the rapid response teams, together with the Operations Centre, should be strengthened at regional level. Another speaker asked how the teams were to be financed and what their functions were when members were not deployed in emergencies.

34. Several delegations said that UNICEF needed to formalize partnerships through memoranda of understanding, which should provide clear accountability and allocation of responsibility. The secretariat drew attention to the ongoing process of developing these memoranda (for example, with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and WFP) and added that cooperative agreements and arrangements were being set up with NGOs and other organizations.

35. There were several questions raised about UNICEF financial capacity during the relief and developmental phases of emergencies. There also were inquiries on the diversion of funds from regular programmes to emergencies and the modalities of switching from one category to another. The secretariat replied that the diversion of funds and/or reprogramming measures in a given emergency were undertaken in agreement with the Government in order to meet the needs of children in distress. A speaker said that because UNICEF espoused a two-pronged approach, i.e., dealing with both emergency and development, the organization should be able to show that its human and financial resources were capable of supporting both, and that the basic package of additional services in emergencies should be financed through supplementary funds. Several delegations supported greater resource mobilization for countries in need. It was stated that even if much of the funding was from supplementary funds, a heavy burden was placed on administrative resources by increased emergency activities because of the large percentage of total expenditure on emergencies (24 per cent in 1993-1994).

36. A number of speakers touched on various policy issues. Several delegations expressed support for the four-pronged approach to emergency assistance, comprising preventive actions, preparedness, emergency assistance and rehabilitation and recovery assistance. Other delegations expressed satisfaction with the UNICEF policy on not knowingly procuring materials and services from companies involved with the manufacture of land-mines. However, one speaker said that UNICEF should advocate more strongly in favour of a ban on land-mines. On the implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/56 of 28 July 1995 on strengthening coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, it was stated that the resolution clearly identified the need to evaluate individual response capacities in addition to reviewing the overall United Nations response capacity, and that the implementation of this resolution should be coordinated with other United Nations agencies. The secretariat replied that UNICEF was participating in the task force set up by DHA on follow-up to the resolution. In reference to the proposed optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, one delegation supported raising the draft age of children to 18 years. Another delegation sought clarification on the role of reproductive health in emergencies and cited a draft field manual on the subject outlining various protocols to be followed by United Nations personnel in that area, including services related to the distribution of contraceptives and post-coital contraception. The delegation requested specific written assurances that UNICEF would continue to act within its mandate, which did not include the provision of the services described in the draft field manual.

37. On the mobilization of resources, one delegation stated that in the past, donors have not given adequate attention to certain emergencies because they lacked sufficient information to judge their severity as against situations receiving greater publicity, and requested that in every emergency appeal it issues, UNICEF should provide a brief overall picture of all of its ongoing emergency operations so that the emergency for which the appeal is being issued may be placed in context. (See chap. III, decision 1996/2, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

C. Country notes

38. The Executive Board had before it a series of country notes (E/ICEF/1996/P/L.1-E/ICEF/1996/P/L.41). The President recalled that in decision 1995/8 (E/ICEF/1995/9/Rev.1), adopted at the first regular session of 1995, the

Executive Board had decided that the secretariat, in consultation with recipient Governments, would inform the Board at an early stage of its preliminary ideas regarding the mix and weight given to programme strategies and priorities in each country programme. That would be done by submitting a brief county note to the Board for comments.

39. The Board agreed with the President that following a general introduction by the Executive Director on the process followed in the preparation of country notes, delegations would have the opportunity to make general comments on the country notes and the process followed in their preparation. The country notes for each region would then be considered, preceded by introductions by the respective regional directors. Following those discussions, the Board would take note of the comments made by delegations, which the secretariat would share with the Governments concerned. The country notes would subsequently be developed into full CPRs and submitted to the Executive Board at its third regular session of 1996 for approval on a "no objection" basis, as indicated in decision 1995/8.

General discussion on process

40. A delegation, speaking on behalf of a group of States and supported by representatives of two other regional groups, said that it was important to observe the provision of decision 1995/8 that affirmed that the recipient Government is responsible for the preparation and the ownership of the country programme of cooperation as well as the coordination of donor assistance. Because the purpose of the country note was to inform the Board of the progress of the preparation of the country programme strategy, the scope of the Board's discussion should focus on a general level rather than on individual country notes. Several other delegations supported the new process for approval of country programmes and the Executive Board's role in formulating programme strategies. Another speaker said that the new process, with the inclusion of the country notes, had increased the workload for both members and the secretariat, but it was useful for upgrading the quality of programmes.

41. A number of delegations said they were committed to implementing decision 1995/8 in terms of the Board's responsibility to provide comments on the country notes. Several delegations agreed that the recipient Government had the responsibility for the preparation of the country programme, but also said that decision 1995/8 called upon the Executive Board to comment on the country note so as to ensure that UNICEF policies were being taken into account in the country programmes.

42. A delegation expressed concern about the high levels of supplementary funding proposed in most of the country notes and asked whether UNICEF had assurances from donors that supplementary funding would be available. The country note should specify a core programme to be supported through general resources and differentiated from the portion of the country programme which would require supplementary funding. Other delegations also voiced concern about levels of supplementary funding. It was suggested that the country note include a statement on the status of supplementary funding achieved during the previous programme and that the country note present a full picture of resources allocated to the programme by the recipient Government and all donor partners.

43. Several delegations commented on the importance of supplementary funding. One speaker said that the quality of strategic programming in UNICEF cooperation had improved significantly and suggested that donors provide a higher degree of certainty in providing supplementary funding for multi-year periods. A second

delegation urged that while objectives should not be overly ambitious with respect to raising supplementary funds, they should be optimistic. A third delegation stated that the secretariat had properly considered the balance between two key factors: the actual needs for supplementary funds; and the ability, based on past successes, of the organization to raise and utilize supplementary funds. Another delegation stated that the African countries had many needs and varied strategies according to their country situations, and needed supplementary funding more than some other countries. There was a contradiction in donor countries' call for a reduction in the number of priorities in the country note and their indication that supplementary funds might not be available.

44. A number of delegations also expressed concern about the levels of general resources allocations presented in the country notes. Several of them stated that some countries might not be able to utilize fully the proposed general resources allocations due to low capacity for implementation. In contrast, other countries might be in a position to contribute more resources to the cooperation and, therefore, would not require such high levels of general resources. Two delegations stated that they looked forward to the proposed discussion at a future Board session on the criteria for the allocation of general resources, and one of them stated that it was concerned about the inadequate levels of resources being allocated to the least developed countries. The same delegation requested that the approval of general resources allocations for the countries being reviewed be deferred until the Board had reviewed the medium-term plan. One speaker suggested that the country note make more specific references both to Governments' policies and budgetary contributions to the various programmes proposed for UNICEF assistance.

45. The Acting Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, said that the secretariat recognized that UNICEF resources were not able to address all aspects of countries' goals for children and women, and that the roles of other partners, both multilateral and bilateral, were very important and needed to be well coordinated. The master plan of operations to be formulated for each country programme detailed the ways in which limited UNICEF resources would be used.

46. One delegation recommended that a stronger analysis of the lessons learned from past programme cooperation and final programme evaluations should be included in the country note. Another delegation cited the country note for Bhutan for its reflection of the Government's planning framework and the harmonization of the roles of various donors and asked about the extent to which this approach was being used in other country programmes. Several other delegations stated that many country notes appeared to be too ambitious and did not present well thought out strategic roles for UNICEF cooperation. These delegations also cited the lack of feasible, measurable objectives and said that the scope and objectives of the cooperation should be much clearer in the CPRs. The country note should show more clearly how UNICEF cooperation related to the roles of other multilateral and bilateral donors. In this context, another delegation urged that the country note present a clearer picture of the proposed activities of UNICEF and the plans of the recipient Government and other donors, thus illuminating a pattern of closer partnerships. One delegation said that the country notes did not sufficiently demonstrate the UNICEF priority to Africa, and sought a clarification on UNICEF support to the Bamako Initiative from headquarters and regional levels. In addition, the quality of the country notes was not sufficiently homogeneous and some were more precise than others in terms of data.

47. Another delegation stated that the country notes reflected good intentions, with advocacy and capacity-building strategies becoming more prominent, but it was difficult to discern how they would be translated into practice. It also would be important to assess the impact of the lessons learned by employing a risk evaluation and benefit analysis. Another speaker added that the major themes of the strategies and the geographic focus or coverage of the country notes should be clearer. However, another delegation said that the country notes were not supposed to present the details of the proposed programme, but were frameworks, admittedly too ambitious and broad in some instances. The CPRs would show more clearly how UNICEF assistance, with its limited resources, would make a distinctive contribution, especially with respect to the strategies of capacity-building and empowerment.

48. Several delegations commented that the country notes did not sufficiently indicate how the proposed country programmes would relate to follow-up to the recent United Nations global conferences. A delegation welcomed the critical support by UNICEF to child rights and said that UNICEF should not reduce its support to child survival in Africa, as the achievement of the goals of the World Summit for Children would be jeopardized without support from UNICEF at the country level. One speaker said that many country notes did not reflect in their strategies adequate linkages with UNICEF global policies related to health, education and water and environmental sanitation. In the same context, a delegation remarked that the country notes did not sufficiently reflect the ways in which the proposed strategy was a change from the past strategy. Some delegations stated that the country notes did not adequately address the prevention of HIV/AIDS, including links with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). Other delegations expressed concern about the lack of reference to follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), especially with respect to women's reproductive health. However, one delegation expressed concern that traditional aspects of UNICEF cooperation in health and education services were not sufficiently developed in many country notes.

49. The Acting Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, said that the UNICEF response to HIV/AIDS was an important part of several country notes, for example in Malawi, Namibia and Zambia, countries in East Asia and in subregional initiatives such as the Mekong Initiative. Also, UNICEF had strengthened its capacity in the West and Central Africa region with the appointment of a regional adviser on HIV/AIDS and reproductive health.

50. A number of delegations said that the consultation process during the preparation of the country notes did not sufficiently involve their bilateral aid agencies or other donor groups, although in some instances the process had been satisfactory. One delegation stated that there were instances in which not even the recipient Government had been fully involved, adding that the observation was not meant to be too critical but was offered as advice. Another delegation, however, assessed the quality of consultation at the country level as improving. One speaker stated that the country notes should explain how UNICEF and his country's bilateral aid programme were related in specific countries. Two delegations suggested that the country notes have a fuller description of the consultation process.

51. The Acting Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, said that since the Executive Board had adopted decision 1995/8 in January 1995, there had not been much time to expand opportunities for participation as many of the country programme preparation exercises were well under way at that time. However, recipient Governments were receptive to the new preparation process, and

feedback from UNICEF country offices indicated that there had been a rich variety of experiences in improving the participatory aspect of the process. For example, there had been substantial participation by local governments in 23 countries, local NGOs had participated in 30 exercises and all the country exercises had involved the resident coordinator and other United Nations agencies. In many instances, a large number of donor partners, both multilateral and bilateral, had participated either through their bilateral donor agencies or their diplomatic missions, but the levels of participation had not been uniform. It appeared to be the case that the content of the country notes focused more on programme strategy content than the process of participation in preparation of the programme strategy. In the future, the country notes would address the participation process more consistently.

52. In considering the extent to which the mix and weight of strategies were satisfactory, a delegation stated that the role of the Executive Board was to ensure that the process of strategic planning and consultation had taken place at the country level with the Government and other donor partners, and to assure that the country note reflected consistency in the application of UNICEF programme policies. There were indications in the country notes that a shift towards a more strategic focus was taking place. However, there was considerable discrepancy among the country notes as to the extent to which strategic choices were emerging. Moreover, the application of the strategies of service delivery, capacity-building and empowerment were not yet consistently presented in the country notes. As a whole, the country notes needed to show more clearly the strategic mix of strategies by using the terminology of the multi-donor evaluation more consistently. The country note was a means by which the UNICEF country office would demonstrate its accountability in the application of UNICEF policies, which was an important part of the management excellence initiative. A second delegation identified the most important improvements needed in the country notes as evidence of a clear relationship with the Government's development plan and with the activities of other donors; a clear thematic and geographical focus; a description of changes in approach to strategies between the previous and proposed programmes; a description of a realistic relationship between the scope of programme objectives and the level of proposed resources; and a clear explanation of the mix and weight of strategies. Another delegation commended the generally stronger focus on capacity-building, empowerment and advocacy, but said that in some cases there were weak explanations of how the strategies would be implemented.

Africa

53. The Executive Board had before it country notes for Comoros, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia in the Eastern and Southern African region (E/ICEF/1996/P/L.1-E/ICEF/1996/P/L.8); and the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo in the West and Central African region (E/ICEF/1996/P/L.9-E/ICEF/1996/P/L.15). Introductory statements were made by the Regional Directors for Eastern and Southern Africa and for West and Central Africa.

54. There were several general comments on the country notes for Africa. One speaker said that the guidelines resulting from major United Nations conferences had not been followed, and that UNICEF commitments to UNAIDS should be reflected in country programme strategies. One speaker underlined the need to see Africa as a whole without separating the continent into geographic regions; UNICEF needed a strategy for resource mobilization for Africa as a whole and for the least developed and poorest countries within Africa. There was a need to

identify the priority countries in Africa, possibly through regional discussions. A delegation stated that African countries had many needs and that strategies for meeting those needs would vary according to the situation and priorities of each country. Comparisons between different countries were not appropriate, as countries had different priorities. The financial resources projected in the country notes were ambitious; some countries needed supplementary funds more than others, but programming was difficult when there was no assurance of securing the funds needed. In countries that were relatively well-off, the use of private sector fund-raising was a good option. Monitoring and evaluation should be included in all country notes. One delegation wondered about the need, on the one hand, to develop a more convergent approach in policies in support of the empowerment of basic communities and the decentralization of the management processes and, on the other hand, to enhance more effectively the value of intervention by non-State partners (NGOs, religious communities, decentralized authorities). The same delegation emphasized the importance of a more qualitative approach in activities, in view of the uncertain reliability of statistics in many countries, and drew attention to the importance of the support given by UNICEF to the implementation of the Bamako Initiative.

55. On the Comoros country note, one delegation said that the country note described a sectoral more than a strategic approach. Another delegation expressed concern about the high population growth rate in the Comoros and questioned the prospects for sustainable growth in the coming five years. The delegation asked how UNICEF would collaborate with UNFPA to tackle the problem.

56. One delegation said that the objectives set out in the country note for Lesotho were overly ambitious in the context of the five-year time-frame. The country note did not include a monitoring and evaluation framework, which should be included in the country programme. Another delegation endorsed the thrust of the strategy, but stressed the need for closer coordination with other international agencies and donors. The speaker asked how the proposed programme would fit into the sectoral investment programmes that were being considered for development in Lesotho and how the proposed country strategy fit with them.

57. One delegation supported the emphasis of the Malawi country programme on raising awareness at the community level and recommended investing in community participation within the changing political environment. The speaker said that a monitoring and evaluation framework should be included in the country programme. Another delegation said that although the country note presented a good strategic mix, the linkages between the strategies and proposed interventions, as well as between the interventions and past and present budgets, were not sufficiently clear. The speaker asked specifically what capacity-building and empowerment entailed, and also questioned whether UNICEF had a comparative advantage in supporting a strategy for women's economic empowerment. A third delegation indicated that its mission in Malawi reported that existing UNICEF support to such areas as AIDS, health and nutrition was effective and important and should be maintained. UNICEF should limit its new initiatives and concentrate on areas of comparative advantage, leaving new areas to other international agencies. The programme needed to adopt a more realistic view of the capacity of the Ministry of Health to deliver essential services. There seemed to have been inadequate consultation with donors on the development of the new programme. Speaking on a point of order, the representative of a group of States said that the political undertones of one speaker were unacceptable.

58. On the Namibia country note, a delegation said that the programme strategies were not linked clearly enough to the objectives, nor were the programme components adequately linked to the strategies. In addition, the objectives appeared too ambitious for the five-year time-frame. Provision should be made for monitoring and evaluation in the programme. There should be a greater effort to "cross-link" the various programme components in the CPR and the Government's budgetary plans and allocations for programme areas should be described. Another delegation said that the emphasis on capacity-building, institutional support and child rights was promising, but recommended greater prioritization through a smaller set of interventions. UNICEF should plan its support at the central level carefully with the Government and should identify government contributions to the programme. UNICEF should adopt the "logical framework analysis" technique for planning being used by donors in Namibia. Another delegation said that UNICEF should emphasize support for measures to reduce the high rate of teenage pregnancy, a factor contributing to the high school drop-out rate among adolescent girls.

59. On the country note for Sao Tome and Principe, a delegation said that key partners should be sensitized on the importance of improving the quality of social service provision, especially in the areas of health and basic education.

60. Several delegations commended the strategic mix of the country note for South Africa and said that the note provided a very clear strategy, with a strong definition of the UNICEF role and an appropriate set of interventions which took into account South Africa's own plans. The country note was well prepared and should be seen as an example. The inclusion of capacity-building work at the provincial level, as well as the existence of a unified policy on early childhood development, were seen as positive elements. It was said that a monitoring and evaluation framework needed to be developed. Another delegation said that the partnership with the National Children's Rights Committee should have been mentioned in the country note and credit given to other partners. The lessons learned section should have been more specific, and the country note should focus on fewer areas, such as the quality of basic education, support to children in especially difficult circumstances and capacity-building at central and local levels. Another delegation called for close coordination with other donors and also questioned the consistency of such "vertical" approaches as micronutrient programmes with the wider approach to improvement of primary health care (PHC). A speaker expressed doubts about the proposed strategy, saying that national priorities were not yet fully defined, and that there was a danger of duplication and overlap among donors because of the transition. The five-year programme framework might be too extensive at this stage, and a bridging programme might be preferable.

61. Concerning the country note for the United Republic of Tanzania, one delegation welcomed the strong and appropriate focus on capacity-building at the local government level, and also on social sector reform and donor collaboration. However, the country note did not illustrate policies and lacked adequate descriptions of how strategies would be put into practice. Another delegation asked what would be the indicators of achievement used to measure the effectiveness of various forms of advocacy, e.g., for the "20/20" approach. The speaker also questioned the extent of the shift away from direct support to service delivery given the state of the public health sector in the country. Another speaker supported the emphasis in the country note on the UNICEF role in capacity-building and empowerment.

62. Several delegations welcomed the strategic mix of the country note for Zambia. One delegation praised the process and content of the situation

analysis. A second delegation, however, requested that the Government be sensitized to renew its commitment to PHC, education and agricultural reform. Another delegation agreed with the strategic mix and the emphasis on capacity-building and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, but called for a clearer description of how strategies would be put into practice and how sustainability would be achieved. Another delegation indicated that the process of discussion with partners at the country level should continue in the coming months, prior to submission of the CPR. Several other delegations noted the strong emphasis on health and the good description of the health programme strategy. These delegations, however, expressed concern that the ongoing sectoral policy reforms in health and the coalition of donor partners supporting them, including UNICEF, were not mentioned in the note. Also mentioned was the lack of discussion on Zambian policy and budget allocations, which should be linked to the country programme strategies to ensure ownership. The same delegation said that UNICEF seemed to do things alone, and that references to collaboration sounded like activities already undertaken. There was a call for a description of the UNICEF programme strategy to be related to Zambia's national plans in each sector. One delegation said that the programme should prioritize to a greater extent and that objectives seemed to be overly ambitious with regard to supplementary funding targets. Another delegation particularly praised the ongoing work by UNICEF in the area of research and information, e.g., on the issue of girls' education.

63. One speaker said that the UNICEF emphasis on educational policy development in the Central African Republic should be linked to the practical aspects of implementation. The objective of reducing the student/teacher ratio might not be realistic given the current economic situation and the fact that the majority of parents were too poor to pay for schooling.

64. A delegation noted UNICEF plans to support social policy reform in key social sectors in Côte d'Ivoire, but asked what UNICEF was doing to reinforce collaboration with key donors in social sector reform.

65. Another delegation said that the new programme in Gabon provided an opportunity to sensitize other key donors to the need for policy development, especially in the health and education sectors.

66. The critical importance of basic education in the UNICEF programme in Guinea was cited by one speaker, who expressed the hope that an attempt would be made to establish a link between basic and technical education. The speaker also stressed the importance of dialogue with civil society, which was an essential element of strategies for sustainable human development and community empowerment. The delegation asked to be informed of steps taken by UNICEF to ensure and strengthen such a dialogue.

67. One delegation stressed that UNICEF and other agencies should ensure that vaccines were supplied to meet children's needs in Nigeria. The crisis in vaccine procurement had led to a decline in the availability of vaccines in several areas. The UNICEF role in measles immunization in countries affected by emergencies had shown that regular development activities, especially for health, could mitigate the effects of disasters. The maintenance of basic services was important in Nigeria.

68. A delegation asked for more information on donor coordination meetings in Senegal and said that it was important for the UNICEF team there to share its experience by participating more actively in such meetings. The representative of Senegal spoke in support of the country note, which he said was the result of

a long and painstaking process involving close cooperation among the Government, UNICEF, other United Nations agencies, NGOs and other parts of civil society. The note incorporated lessons from the mid-term review. The programme would contribute to the achievement of the World Summit for Children goals and implementation of the resolutions of ICPD and the Fourth World Conference on Women.

The Americas and the Caribbean

69. The Executive Board had before it 12 country notes, for Argentina, Belize, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama and Uruguay (E/ICEF/1996/P/L.16-E/ICEF/1996/P/L.27). In a brief overview, the Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean outlined the region's economic, political and social situation; progress towards the mid-decade goals and goals for the decade; cooperation with other organizations; and programme trends.

70. Many delegations thanked the regional director for her presentation and suggested that a diagram she had prepared on the consultation process be a model for reporting to the Executive Board on this issue.

71. In general comments on the region, various delegations highlighted the significant improvement in child health indicators that had benefited from UNICEF support and, in contrast, such continuing problems as growing poverty, increased violence and violation of children's rights, in particular those of indigenous populations. The need for improved access to quality education also was noted. All delegations addressing the issue expressed appreciation for the increased emphasis given to children's and women's rights and urged UNICEF to increase its efforts in this area, including the situation of children in difficult circumstances and violence against children and women. Most delegations expressed concern about the high maternal mortality rates (MMRs) in the region and indicated that this problem requires special attention by Governments and UNICEF in line with the safe motherhood initiative, the UNICEF health policy and follow-up to ICPD and the Fourth World Conference on Women. Several delegations noted the need for increased emphasis on reproductive health, particularly in Central America. Many delegations urged UNICEF to address the critical needs of HIV/AIDS-related problems and their impact on children. A number of delegations said that explicit goals, measurable objectives and criteria for sustainability were lacking in a number of country notes.

72. Several delegations said that the levels of supplementary funding were overly optimistic. A number of delegations said that it would be useful to have a better understanding of the criteria for establishing the supplementary funding levels, which seemed high. One speaker welcomed the strategic and catalytic role of UNICEF, including its Greeting Card and related Operations and active fund-raising within the private sector as a strategy for mobilizing resources within countries.

73. One delegation expressed satisfaction with the general direction of the country programme for Belize and recommended further concentration and streamlining of interventions where feasible. A speaker indicated that the country note should express the strategic choices using the nomenclature of the multi-donor evaluation, and suggested that gender sensitivity and monitoring should be expressed at the level of activities rather than strategies.

74. In referring to the national context of Costa Rica, a delegation noted the many advances in the country, but cautioned that sustainability was an issue and referred to the decline in the quality of education. The pioneering initiative to establish the Office of an Ombudsman for Children was commended, and it was noted that this experience should be shared with other countries. Good coordination between the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in Costa Rica also was noted. One delegation said that UNICEF should consider its capacity in the field and asked how it planned to carry out activities indicated in the country note.

75. A delegation stressed the importance of monitoring the impact of economic changes on the situation of children and women in Cuba, specifically with regard to health and education. The speaker also questioned whether the goals described in the country note were realistic in view of the limited resources available to the programme. Another speaker said that the country note gave a clear indication and reasoning for the strategy mix for Cuba and explicitly endorsed the country note. This delegation also expressed concern about the decline in the health of children and women as a result of economic constraints.

76. A few delegations said that the programme for the Dominican Republic was ambitious given the limited resources available. One delegation expressed satisfaction that the problem of violence against women was addressed and asked if maternal mortality was given sufficient attention in light of the country's extraordinarily high MMR. The same delegation noted the high number of children in especially difficult circumstances (1.8 million) and suggested that greater priority be given to this problem.

77. Concerning the country note for El Salvador, a number of delegations recommended that greater priority be given to women's reproductive health. One delegation asked for clarification as to the criteria for the selection of the 41 priority municipalities identified, saying that there should be close coordination with other partners working in these areas. In addition, close consultations with other bilateral and multilateral partners was needed in the finalization of the country programme in order to avoid duplication. Also cited was the need for indicators to monitor the success of the programme. A delegation recommend that the monitoring systems referred to in the country note be integrated into existing systems.

78. Various delegations said that it was not yet possible to identify how the proposed objectives for Guatemala would be achieved or what indicators had been identified to monitor achievements expected at the end of the programme of cooperation. One speaker noted with concern the limited emphasis given to the impact of violence on children and suggested that more attention be paid to indigenous education and the situation of children in especially difficult circumstances. Another delegation emphasized the importance of sustainability, given the weakness of institutions in Guatemala. Also noted was the importance of coordination between different sectors of society and projects seeking consensus between various sectors. A number of delegations expressed interest in increased dialogue in the field during the remainder of the programme preparation process.

79. Several delegations noted with satisfaction the emphasis placed on the rights of children and women in Nicaragua. However, one speaker said that greater attention should be given to adolescent girls and violence against women. The country note's focus on poverty was commended by another speaker, who asked whether a poverty reduction focus was consistent with the national context of privatization and with considerations of cost-recovery. A number of

delegations noted discrepancies between the data on poverty and the social indicators presented in the situation analysis, and data from other sources such as IDB, UNDP and the World Bank, which indicated that the situation was more serious than was depicted in the country note. Various delegations described the proposed strategy mix as well balanced. One delegation emphasized the importance of capacity-building and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of institutions. A number of delegations said that the programme was ambitious. One speaker saw the need for further prioritization and indicated that past UNICEF experience should help to identify areas where UNICEF had comparative advantages. The country note should be more problem-oriented and indicate more clearly how UNICEF planned to do what it proposed. Another delegation noted the importance of indicators to measure progress. A number of delegations asked if enough attention was being given to reproductive health activities as reflected in the UNICEF health strategy. One delegation asked why the note emphasized support for the early grades of primary school, and another speaker suggested a more comprehensive approach to education. The gains in water supply coverage were noted by one delegation, which said that similar gains had yet to be achieved for sanitation and asked what was being proposed to improve this situation. It was stated that technical coordination between partners, including bilateral assistance programmes, should be recognized, as should collaboration with subregional institutions and programmes.

80. A number of delegations commented favourably on the thrust and strategic mix proposed in the country note for Panama. Speakers expressed satisfaction with the increased focus on the education of children and indigenous communities. Another speaker noted favourably the increased mobilization of resources.

81. One delegation said that the country note for Uruguay did not make substantial comments on gender issues and women's rights. The reference to "a gender perspective [promoting] specific activities to empower girls and women" was not convincing. Another delegation suggested that more could have been learned from lessons from the previous cooperation period. UNICEF cooperation should take into consideration the country's technological advancements. Child protection was important, but attention also should be paid to equal access to education and equal opportunities. Another speaker recognized the importance of child protection, but asked whether it was overemphasized in the country note. The country had experienced a recession, with 24 per cent of the urban and 48 per cent of the rural population now in poverty, and infant mortality had increased. The speaker asked if the change of focus away from health and education was justified and said he observed a change in thrust from support to projects with a tangible and clear impact to that of a specialized child consultancy. While recognizing the appropriateness of this role, he questioned whether it should be the exclusive role of UNICEF in the country.

Asia

82. The Executive Board had before it country notes for Malaysia, Mongolia and the Pacific Island countries in the East Asia and the Pacific region (E/ICEF/1996/P/L.28-E/ICEF/1996/P/L.30); and Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka in the South Asia region (E/ICEF/1996/P/L.31-E/ICEF/1996/P/L.33). The country notes were introduced by the Regional Directors for East Asia and the Pacific and for South Asia.

83. Several delegations endorsed the country notes for East Asia and the Pacific, saying that they were in line with the commitments made at the regional

consultation on mid-decade goals held in 1995 in Hanoi, Viet Nam, and responded to the socio-economic developments of the region and needs of children. One delegation highlighted the strong cooperation between UNICEF and the countries of the region. Another speaker said that as a result of industrialization in the region, the number of women in the labour force had increased, so there was less parental time for child-rearing. Consequently, indicators should be developed for monitoring and reporting on implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, especially in countries such as Malaysia. Also, programmes should include components on parental guidance and HIV/AIDS.

84. One delegation said that the country notes had some omissions, including insufficient attention to UNICEF contributions and achievements in making the Pacific polio-free. Those efforts would become increasingly important as the initiative moved to South Asia and Africa. The speaker expressed the hope that UNICEF work in the polio programme would not wane but instead gain momentum through collaboration and coordination with WHO and NGOs. In addition, more attention should be given in the country notes to the needs of forgotten minorities, and even majorities in some countries. The speaker said that the country notes had not addressed HIV/AIDS and reproductive health in line with strategies adopted by the Executive Board, and asked if this was because the health strategy had not yet been implemented. The issue of high supplementary funding levels also was raised. Although the supplementary funding component in Asia was only twice that of general resources, as compared with Latin America, where it was as much as five times the general resources level, there was concern about the viability of core programmes if the anticipated supplementary funding was not forthcoming.

85. Regarding its own country note, the delegation of Mongolia reviewed its national situation and stressed the Government's priority for children's issues. Because Mongolia was grappling with the effects of transition to a market economy, the Government's policy was to protect the most vulnerable segments of society, especially children and women, from any adverse impact of the transition. The Government and civil society had developed a plan to protect children along the lines of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The country note had been prepared in full cooperation with the Government, other United Nations agencies and multilateral and bilateral donors, and was in accordance with the national programme of action and the poverty alleviation programme.

86. A delegation expressed satisfaction at the strong reflection of the Government's social sector policies in the country note for Bhutan. Another delegation was impressed by the clarity of the proposed strategy and said that it could be a model for other countries. The speaker welcomed the emphasis on quality in education and the focus on community schools and non-formal education. She also agreed with the strong emphasis given to gender-sensitive planning, but found it unfortunate that this was not translated into extra attention to women's health issues. The lack of attention to the growing problem of HIV/AIDS was of some concern. Another delegation said that more attention should be paid to the sectoral support approach, with better coordination among donors and better integration of their support to government sectoral programmes. Donors should move towards providing financial and technical assistance to government programmes instead of setting up their own activities and spreading resources in separate and dispersed projects. The country note clearly dealt with the strategic mix, but, as with other countries, it was difficult to determine how the effectiveness of the strategy mix could be assessed. The delegation asked how the secretariat intended to monitor the effect of changes in strategy and results of the mix of strategies. Better

indicators were needed and one suggestion would be to have those issues elaborated in the CPR. The trends in the types of assistance UNICEF provided could be analysed and the results compared with previous programmes. One delegation invited the secretariat to comment on the discrepancy between the MMR figures in the country note (380 per 100,000 live births) and the figure given in The Progress of Nations (1,310 per 100,000 live births). The Regional Director for South Asia explained that for technical reasons, data on MMR were extremely unreliable for many countries, and in the case of Bhutan, the country note had used the figures from a recent survey, while The Progress of Nations still used the officially accepted figure of several years ago.

87. On the country note for Nepal, a number of delegations said that the general thrust of the proposed strategies was appropriate and in line with the country's main problems. One delegation commended the country note for its well-balanced strategy, appropriate programme concentration and multisectoral and multi-partner approach. However, another delegation found the country note in general to be less focused than some others and said that while past experience called for avoiding the proliferation of projects as specifically mentioned in the note, this was not actually reflected in the note itself. UNICEF seemed to want to work in too many areas and might not be, for example, the best placed agency to deal with women's credit schemes. A delegation saw issues of health and gender inequality as crucial in Nepal, as the note reflected, but according to its own assessment of the country situation, potential obstacles to achieving programme objectives were a lack of female staff at all levels and the low level of performance of community volunteers. There was a need for a drastic change in the top-down training model currently implemented and the establishment of effective monitoring of the impact of training. There also should be a reference to HIV/AIDS in the proposed programme. A delegation asked the secretariat to comment on declining coverage of Nepal's immunization programme and how this would be taken into account in the country programme. The regional director said that the country office was helping the Government to resolve the problem, which had been caused mainly by major government staffing changes in the country. Several delegations referred to the process of consultation with donors. One speaker said that while there was good collaboration between UNICEF and some of the United Nations agencies, the necessary coordination mechanisms had not been set up at the country level. Coordination with and among bilateral agencies was inadequate, with each agency acting in accordance with its own priorities. Another delegation called for better coordination efforts to ensure efficient use of the many donor inputs and programmes under way in Nepal. In agreeing with the general intent of the strategy, one delegation was more concerned about how the strategy would be implemented. The country note referred to a multisectoral approach and the UNICEF office intended to organize itself on a thematic basis; the Government, however, would still operate sectorally, as would other agencies such as UNDP and UNFPA.

88. Concerning the country note for Sri Lanka, one delegation commended the overall strategy presented in the note, which clearly reflected the interest of UNICEF in child survival and development, and welcomed the emphasis on gender issues. However, the note gave rise to a few concerns: more attention should be paid to the impact of the armed conflict on women and children; the strategy should indicate how the programme would deal with recent developments in the country; the complementarity of UNICEF with other organizations, whether related to emergency activities or in general, should be indicated; and more emphasis should be placed on the problems of water and sanitation, which were clearly identified as priorities by the Government of Sri Lanka. The secretariat said that in the next programme cycle, UNICEF would continue to support the

population affected by armed conflict, particularly women and children, using $4.5 million for the provision of drinking water, sanitation, health, nutrition, education for conflict resolution and community-based rehabilitation of traumatized children. Support to water and sanitation was an integral part of the strategy to improve the nutritional status of the targeted population in Sri Lanka. Another delegation said that progress in the area of child survival and development, e.g., PHC, allowed UNICEF support to shift towards promoting the protection of children's rights and participation. A delegation said that the current country programme for 1992-1996 had not been fully implemented, perhaps because of overly ambitious goals; the goals set in the proposed programme were less ambitious, with more focus on malnutrition and violence against children. Because of special difficulties in Sri Lanka, UNICEF should intensify support for the Government's efforts in tackling issues related to nutrition and the protection of children, especially those affected by armed conflict.

Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States

89. The Executive Board had before it country notes for the Republic of Moldova and Turkey (E/ICEF/1996/P/L.34 and E/ICEF/1995/P/L.35), which were introduced by the Acting Regional Director. Representatives of both countries expressed appreciation for the country notes and for the UNICEF programmes of cooperation in their countries.

Middle East and North Africa

90. The Executive Board had before it country notes for Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, the Sudan and Tunisia (E/ICEF/1996/P/L.36-E/ICEF/1996/P/L.40), which were introduced by the Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa.

91. On the country note for Tunisia, a delegation said that the UNICEF approach to dealing with women's and children's problems was realistic, but the balance between general resources and supplementary funding needed to be reviewed and justified. Another delegation said that the budget was well prepared and referred particularly to the balance between general resources and supplementary funding. A delegation commended the emphasis placed on education and underlined the importance of education for the development of children. The representative of Tunisia said that UNICEF worked well in cooperation with existing government services and affirmed his Government's commitment to the well-being of children. Some 60 per cent of the government budget was allocated to health, education and social development. Tunisia had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and adopted a law for the development and the protection of children. Education was obligatory and free for children from ages 6 to 16 years, as were health services.

92. One delegation said that the country note for Morocco emphasized rural areas and provided realistic views of health care and education in those areas. It was noteworthy that the country note focused on high illiteracy rates, child mortality, implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and expansion of education. Priority should be given to education and social services in rural and semi-rural areas and to the promotion of girls, while social services, community action and empowerment of civil society should be strengthened. It was regrettable that coordination with other agencies did not include WHO. Implementation of the AIDS programme was not mentioned. In addition, the balance between general resources and additional funds should be revised. Another delegation said that the country note should refer to Morocco's excellent vaccine independence initiative and the sustainable progress

made. The programme was encouraging to donors, some of whom had already supported the initiative; UNICEF should pursue collaboration with donors.

93. One delegation said that the country note for Lebanon was not ambitious enough and that UNICEF should resume its leading role in the country. Lebanon was undergoing post-emergency rehabilitation, which justified increased funding. The note did not provide an explanation for the lack of funds mobilized by UNICEF every year; additional funding needs should be described in the document and UNICEF should be more active in securing funds. Another speaker said that the programme strategy focused on capacity-building in health, education, children in especially difficult circumstances and collaboration with NGOs. Of note were the multisectoral approach and area-focused programmes, with an emphasis on high-risk areas, underserved rural areas, conflict areas and urban slums. Special attention should be given to Palestinian children. Finally, the Committee on the Rights of the Child would review the report of the Government of Lebanon in May 1996, and its conclusions should be reflected in the CPR, following discussions with the Government. Another delegation suggested that UNICEF use Lebanon as a case study on post-crisis development assistance. The speaker underlined the close relationship and coordination among the Government, UNICEF and other operational agencies.

94. Several delegations congratulated Oman on its progress towards the mid-decade goals and its graduation from the ranks of recipient countries. A delegation supported concluding the country programme by the year 2000 or sooner. Another requested that the CPR for Oman give a clearer picture of what would happen after UNICEF left Oman and of what type of support UNICEF would provide to the new national high-level body for children that would be created.

95. Concerning the country note for the Sudan, a delegation said that owing to the lack of supplementary funding contributions for the humanitarian programme in 1995, general resources had been used to cover its costs. There were several queries about the amount of general resources involved and the extent to which this type of transfer be repeated in the near future; and about whether the amount of $25 million in supplementary funding proposed in the country note was realistic, given the shortage of supplementary funding contributions for the previous country programme. In addition, because the country note indicated that there was a general lack of data regarding children and women, there was a need to conduct a solid quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the conditions of children. The proposed country programme was too ambitious in a number of fields. In view of the shortage of funds, UNICEF should better prioritize the activities and make the programme more targeted. Such prioritization should not only be by sector of assistance, but also by recipient community. Another speaker stated that as the situation of children in the country continued to be critical, UNICEF should concentrate on child protection issues. There was close cooperation between UNICEF and the Government, and the country note had obviously been carefully considered with the Government. In view of the planned introduction of compulsory education, UNICEF should exercise caution in cooperating with the Government in the education sector. The representative of the Sudan reaffirmed the Government's commitment to the rights of the child, to the education of girls and to providing basic services for children, including vaccination. Education would become compulsory next year, and UNICEF support to that sector would be appreciated. The Government, in collaboration with all United Nations agencies including UNICEF, had prepared a country strategy note, which was about to be finalized. UNICEF should build on the decentralized structure of the Government and promote sustainability and effectiveness. The Government would like to see a shift from an emergency to a

rehabilitation/development type of programme to ensure sustainability of services for children.

96. The representative of Iraq expressed his gratitude to UNICEF for its humanitarian work in alleviating the sufferings of children in the country. Despite the steep decline in the conditions of children and women, UNICEF resources for Iraq had declined considerably from $52 million in 1993 to $13.9 million in 1995. Although he understood the financial and other limitations faced by UNICEF, he expressed the hope that UNICEF would be able to commit more resources to help more Iraqi children. The conditions of children in Iraq would improve when the sanctions were lifted, and Iraq then would not need UNICEF assistance. Another speaker said that until five or six years ago, children had enjoyed good health in Iraq, but now malnutrition was prevalent. The delegation fully supported more material and technical assistance to Iraq. Another delegation expressed concern about the decrease in the budget and asked if the large reduction in resources was peculiar to Iraq or was more symptomatic.

97. The Executive Director said that the reduction in general resources was applicable not only to Iraq. Currently, UNICEF was facing budgetary constraints, as were other United Nations agencies. There was not a significant decrease in the UNICEF programme in Iraq, but after a period of a complex and highly visible emergency, donor funding for Iraq had become less generous. General resources had remained stable, but supplementary funding had declined. The basic programmes were still ensured and the reduction was not dramatic.

Conclusion

98. The Executive Board took note of the comments made by delegations during the debate, which the secretariat would share with the Governments concerned. The President reminded the Executive Board that in accordance with the procedure agreed upon, the country notes would be developed into full CPRs and presented to the Executive Board at its third regular session of 1996 for approval on a "no objection" basis. Delegations with comments on the CPRs would have to submit them in writing to the secretariat or the "no objection" approval would take place.

D. Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women

99. The Executive Board had before it a report on UNICEF follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women (E/ICEF/1996/3 and Corr.1), which was introduced by the Executive Director.

100. Board members generally endorsed the UNICEF proposals for follow-up to the Beijing Conference and agreed with the three priority areas identified in the paper: girls' education; adolescent girls' and women's health; and children's and women's rights. Delegations said that the rights and well-being of children were closely linked to the rights and status of women and that the Beijing Platform for Action had accorded importance to the girl child. Speakers commended UNICEF advocacy efforts during the preparatory work and at the Conference itself. However, one delegation stressed that the ultimate mission of UNICEF is to promote the well-being of children and that it is as a means to that end that UNICEF plays an advocacy role with regard to the promotion of the rights of women, including the girl child.

101. A number of delegations agreed on giving priority attention to girls' education and urged that concrete actions be worked out for overcoming the obstacles faced by girls. Speakers pointed out the connection between girls' education and poverty alleviation and the need for new approaches for tackling this area. Two delegations called for specific actions to retain girls in school. The secretariat said that major initiatives were under way in Africa with funding support from the Canadian International Development Agency and the Government of Norway. Successful interventions in Asia were being studied, and the lessons learned were being applied in the design and implementation of programmes for girls' education.

102. A few delegations expressed concern about the implications of the priority given to adolescent girls' health in relation to the primary focus of UNICEF on child health. One delegation stated that UNICEF should not detract from its broad focus on the health, nutrition and education of girls in order to give priority to reproductive health services for adolescents, which was the mandate of such other United Nations agencies as UNFPA and WHO. UNICEF should continue to address the needs of younger pre-adolescent girls. On the other hand, some delegations appreciated the attention to this age-group and urged that it be even more focused. The secretariat clarified that the health of younger girls and children would continue to be of primary concern in the work of UNICEF. However, within the life cycle perspective, the health needs of adolescent girls emerged as a critical area for action because of the rising incidence of teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. In response to concerns expressed about the role of UNICEF in the provision of reproductive health services, the Acting Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, clarified that the UNICEF position in this regard was consistent with the policy on the UNICEF health strategy approved by the Executive Board in 1995 (E/ICEF/1995/9/Rev.1, decision 1995/28). Family planning and reproductive health services to which UNICEF might provide support included essential obstetric care, planning of safe delivery, prenatal care, prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, and the provision of information, education and communication on family planning and reproductive health.

103. Several speakers commended the renewed emphasis on women's rights and urged UNICEF involvement in the ratification and implementation of both the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. One delegation stated that actions should address the removal of reservations made by countries in ratifying the latter Convention, and a few delegations cautioned against giving it equal importance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The secretariat replied that there was growing recognition of both Conventions as joint instruments for achieving the goals for children and women in UNICEF country programmes. In fact, 7 of the 40 country notes submitted to the Board had explicitly used the two Conventions as the framework for identifying objectives and developing strategies.

104. Some speakers said that the gender-specific needs of women and girls in emergency situations had to be addressed. Many delegations urged that such interventions include health, nutrition, education and the protection of women and girls. Violence against women and girls, sexual abuse and exploitation were identified as areas for action. Delegations drew attention to the issue of harmful traditional practices, especially female genital mutilation, which they said was both a violation of human rights and a health hazard, with harmful physical and psychological effects on girls and women. The secretariat responded that detailed programme guidelines had been prepared for action at the

country level using lessons learned from extensive ongoing programmes to end this practice in Burkina Faso and the Sudan.

105. One speaker said that in some countries, the situation and position of men and boys was emerging as an area for concern. Women had attained increasingly higher status, thus marginalizing men, and the incidence of violence against women and girls was rising. Other delegations spoke about the role of men in families, the redefinition of gender roles and greater sharing of responsibilities. The secretariat said that this was a relatively new area for UNICEF. Based on initiatives in the Caribbean and Viet Nam, a recent staff seminar had developed programme strategies to address these issues in a systematic manner.

106. A number of delegations spoke about the importance of a gender perspective in development programmes. The mainstreaming of gender across all programmes was vital and a prerequisite to the follow-up of the Beijing Platform for Action. A speaker said that there was a need for an institutional strategy, with mechanisms for gender training, integrating gender perspectives and accountability. The secretariat said that through the capacity-building programme for gender, by the end of 1995, more than 235 workshops had been organized at regional and country levels through which some 1,200 UNICEF staff and 7,800 counterparts had been oriented to gender concepts and the women's equality and empowerment framework. The global network of external gender resource persons has been expanded to 50 experts, and overall the capacity-building efforts had begun to yield dividends. A gender analysis of the country notes being presented to the Board showed that of 40 country notes, the gender profile of 17 emerged as high, 13 as medium and 10 as needing improvement. Further, age and gender disaggregation and analysis increasingly were essential components of all stages of country programmes, starting with the situation analysis.

107. Several delegations expressed appreciation to UNICEF for its commitment to double its resources for girls' education, and urged that resources be committed for follow-up to other areas of the Beijing Platform for Action. The issues of inter-agency collaboration, overlap and duplication in follow-up efforts were raised. Speakers also pointed out the efficacy of interrelated and integrated follow-up to the recent global conferences in UNICEF country programmes. The secretariat said that follow-up would be undertaken in an integrated manner. With regard to the Platform for Action of the Beijing Conference, the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women would submit a draft system-wide medium-term plan to the Commission on the Status of Women at its session in March 1996. UNICEF had contributed to its preparation. (See chap. III, decision 1996/3, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)

E. The fiftieth anniversary of UNICEF

108. The Executive Board had before it a report on the fiftieth anniversary of UNICEF (E/ICEF/1996/5), which was introduced by the Executive Director. She said that UNICEF was not planning any self-congratulatory activities, but instead would focus on resource mobilization and advocacy in connection with UNICEF priorities. All activities would take place within existing budgets as the secretariat was aware of the need not to divert programme funds. Field offices and National Committees for UNICEF had responded enthusiastically to the call for initiatives to mark the anniversary, with more than 100 countries planning activities. These included the issuance of special postage stamps, activities involving children and fund-raising opportunities. Hopefully, on

11 December, the General Assembly would dedicate a meeting to the fiftieth anniversary of UNICEF.

109. Many delegations agreed with the ideas outlined by the Executive Director. While acknowledging the need to avoid self-congratulatory messages, many said that the Executive Board should commemorate the organization's founding at some point during the annual session. Some delegations suggested that children be associated with the event and that a well-known keynote speaker be invited to address the Board. The representative of the Netherlands announced that his Government is increasing its annual contribution to general resources by $5 million. He also indicated that the Government of the Netherlands is in favour of an appropriate and lively commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary and that it has no objection to using general resources to finance the events.

110. The Executive Director replied that the secretariat would be very interested in meeting with delegations to discuss appropriate activities for the annual session. The Director of the Division of Public Affairs added that the secretariat would be able to work towards dedicating some portion of the annual session to commemorate the anniversary. Other events during the year would include the Day of the African Child (17 June), a day of reflection on the mid-decade goals (30 September), the launch of the Graça Machel study on the impact of children in war, stressing the relationship with child rights (20 November) and the actual anniversary of the founding of UNICEF (11 December). An international gathering of children had been envisaged for 20 November, but perhaps could take place at the annual session instead.

111. The Executive Board took note of the report (see chap. III, decision 1996/4) and agreed to discuss the matter further at the second regular session in April.

F. Follow-up to decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council

112. The Executive Board had before it a report on follow-up to decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council at its 1995 substantive session (E/ICEF/1996/6), which was introduced by the Executive Director. She informed the Executive Board of developments that had occurred since the submission of the report and the General Assembly's triennial review of operational activities for development and subsequent adoption of resolution 50/120 of 20 December 1995.

113. Many delegations said that the reports on follow-up to decisions taken by the Council submitted to the Executive Boards of UNICEF and UNDP/UNFPA had few similarities and different formats. They recommended that the three secretariats adopt a similar format for reporting to their Boards and to the Council. Some delegations recommended that an inter-sessional consultation be convened to resolve the issue.

114. Delegations requested that UNICEF report in detail on follow-up to resolutions of the Economic and Social Council and General Assembly on the triennial policy review of operational activities for development, particularly the division of responsibilities and focus on priority areas, the establishment of executive committees in the field, common understanding and implementation of concepts on capacity-building, and support to national execution. Some delegations requested detailed information on the steps taken by UNICEF to

provide candidates for resident coordinators positions. The Executive Director agreed to increase efforts in this area.

115. The Executive Board took note of the report (see chap. III, decision 1996/4) and requested the secretariat to provide more detailed information on follow-up to the 1995 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council at the second regular session in April.

G. Other matters

Progress report on the audit of the Kenya country office

116. The Executive Board had before it a report on progress with regard to the audit of the Kenya country office (E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.1), which was introduced by the Executive Director. She said that the office was returning to normal operations, with appropriate staffing. The report showed that as of November 1995, 21 staff had been separated, with 17 summary dismissals, and there had been 2 additional dismissals since then. While in February 1995, there had been 250 staff in the office, total staff now numbered approximately 80.

117. A delegation said that it was obvious from the report that the Board had not been informed of many events that had taken place. There should be more openness and a more detailed briefing would be appreciated, paying attention to concrete conclusions drawn for specific follow-up activities. Another speaker said that the next report should provide information about the status of the 23 fraud charges against the former staff members. The delegation supported the Executive Director in her personal involvement in the resolution of the Kenya situation and her efforts to improve the overall accountability of UNICEF. However, UNICEF should ensure that an appropriate balance was struck between control and cost-effective programme delivery when instituting the proposed reforms. Another delegation said that the report indicated how audit policies and systems were being addressed, but did not include a report on how UNICEF could use reports on over-commitments and overspending to trigger action to examine their causes, which had been requested by the Executive Board, and he asked when it could be expected. The Board also had requested the secretariat to look into criteria for eligibility for classification as NGOs and to review NGOs implementing UNICEF programmes, and he asked what progress had been made in that area.

118. The Executive Director said that the best way to provide regular ongoing information might be for the UNICEF representative in Kenya to brief donor representatives in that country. Improving efficiency meant improving the way programmes were carried out. As to using information to be pro-active, the work being done in the areas of integrated budgets and field-support systems should provide more usable information, and the work being done on accountability should be useful in general in helping to identify problems before they got out of hand. As for NGOs, she had just issued a revised model NGO agreement that was the result of a comprehensive series of consultations on how best to enter into arrangements with international and national NGOs. Responding to a request, she said copies of the agreement would be made available to delegations. The Executive Board took note of the report (see chap. III, decision 1996/4).

Dissemination of documentation

119. On behalf of the nine francophone members of the Executive Board, the delegation of Romania introduced a draft decision on the dissemination of documents in working and official languages. He said that it was imperative that there be strict compliance with the rules established on languages throughout the United Nations system. The numerous issues posed by the dissemination of documentation could not be settled without insight into the various elements of each case. With four sessions per year and the obligation to disseminate documents six weeks prior to the start of each session, a rule that was clearly strengthened by General Assembly resolution 50/11 of 2 November 1995 on multilingualism, the dissemination of documents in all official languages represented a real challenge, but one which could be mastered. Resolution 50/11 mandated eliminating or at least reducing the generalized practice of issuing preliminary documents. Better organization of the work of the secretariat might make it possible to disseminate key documents for Executive Board sessions far earlier. Better structuring of priorities among various documents and a precise determination of the number of pages involved were factors in the process, together with a degree of self-discipline in managing the reports requested by the Executive Board. All those avenues could be explored and the Executive Director could report to the annual session, submitting specific and practical proposals to establish simple and effective rules on the issue. Concerning the implications to be drawn from any late production of documents, the francophone members of the Executive Board reserved the right to request that documents not disseminated according to the rules of General Assembly resolution 50/11 be postponed until the next Board session.

120. One speaker asked the secretariat and members of the Executive Board to keep in mind the time required for consultation on draft documents and their translation before specifying dates for reports being requested. Another delegation said that because the cost aspect of the issue was very important, the need to limit administrative costs should be included in the working group's programme. The draft decision was adopted by the Executive Board (see chap. III, decision 1996/5, for the full text).

Documentation for future sessions of the Executive Board

121. On the recommendation of the Executive Director, the Executive Board agreed that the following reports, which had been presented annually, should be discontinued: a report on the reduction of outstanding balances through savings or cancellations and funds to cover overexpenditures on approved budgets; the review of expenditures in excess of commitments for completed projects financed by supplementary funds; and a report on the use of general resources for projects approved for supplementary funding (see chap. III, decision 1996/6).

122. Also on the recommendation of the Executive Director, the Board agreed: (a) that a report on the implementation of the health strategy, originally scheduled for the second regular session of 1996, be presented to the third regular session; and (b) that a report on the optimal structure and location of GCO, originally scheduled for the annual session, be presented to the third regular session (see chap. III, decision 1996/6). The latter was agreed to on the understanding that the annual GCO work plan and budget be submitted, as scheduled, to the annual session which generally had larger participation of National Committees for UNICEF.

Child protection in all countries

123. A delegation stated that in addition to the remarkable role of UNICEF in developing countries, certain other areas of concern for children were not addressed by UNICEF as they should be, as they involved a regional group that provided funds and did not receive them. The "exempt group" was always exempt from discussion at Executive Board sessions. It was not realistic to assume that children in donor countries were absolutely free from child abuse. Since UNICEF was a universal body and the child a universal concern, her delegation requested UNICEF action in three areas of concern. First, delegations from recipient countries were forced to listen to indictments on the need to avoid child labour. But who was to take action against Governments of "exempt countries" which had no control over their private businesses? Did the multinational corporations headquartered in the "exempt group" have a policy of paying their own countries' minimum wages in the developing countries? The speaker asked UNICEF, without any diversion of resources from programme countries, to provide data on counterpart responsibility of the "exempt group". Secondly, she asked UNICEF to provide information and advocacy on cases of adoption of children from child homes in developing countries into some countries from the "exempt group". The speaker's final concern was the prevalence of child pornography all over the world. In areas such as child abuse, child prostitution and child pornography, UNICEF should find the means to inform the Executive Board of the status of children globally, including the "exempt region". Some details of the nationalities of the "clientele" of child prostitutes, if and where they existed, also should be provided.

124. Another delegation said that over 1 million children world wide were forced into the sexual market every year. This and related problems would be addressed at the World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, to be held from 27 to 31 August 1996 in Stockholm, Sweden.

125. A number of delegations shared the concerns raised by the first speaker and agreed that UNICEF should be able to provide the information, most of which should be available. One speaker suggested that the International Child Development Centre could play a role in the process. The Executive Director said that she found the discussion to be very encouraging, as the Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children applied to the whole world. UNICEF had provided some relevant information in both the State of the World's Children and The Progress of Nations, but it was difficult to find some of the information, so the secretariat would welcome any assistance available.

Draft report on internal oversight mechanisms

126. Referring to an informal presentation by the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services on a draft report of the Secretary-General on enhancing the internal oversight mechanisms in operational funds and programmes, a speaker said that the Executive Board should make provisions to discuss the draft report at a future session. Also, the draft report should be made available to delegations as soon as possible. The Executive Director said that UNICEF had just received the draft report and would confer with the other funds and programmes to ensure a coordinated response. (The draft report was subsequently distributed in all official languages to members of the Executive Board by the Executive Director.)

Farewell to Richard Jolly

127. Dr. Richard Jolly, who had served as UNICEF Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, for 14 years, addressed the Executive Board for the last time, upon his new assignment as Special Adviser to the UNDP Administrator, responsible for the preparation of the annual Human Development Report. Following his statement, in which he outlined some of the major trends and successes that occurred during his tenure at UNICEF, the Executive Director and the President, on behalf of the Board, wished him success in his new endeavour and thanked him for his service to UNICEF and the world's children.

H. Closing remarks

128. The Executive Director said that the session had been a most auspicious beginning to the fiftieth anniversary year of UNICEF. The Board had completed a full and substantive agenda, with the assistance of the President and the Vice-Presidents. The Board had provided excellent and clear guidance on a number of issues, including the mission statement, which would be disseminated to every UNICEF office and staff member around the world. The participatory process used to develop the mission statement would continue with the management excellence programme. The secretariat looked forward to organizing inter-sessional meetings and would invite members to attend staff discussions on management excellence activities. The country programming process had been strengthened by the Board's comments on country notes. The guidance provided by the Board on other issues also would be taken fully into account by the secretariat.

129. The President said that during the session, the members of the Executive Board, observers and the secretariat had exhibited a spirit of real cooperation and compromise in keeping with the Board's traditions and those of UNICEF. The mission statement adopted by the Executive Board provided a vision for the next 50 years, while the debate on country notes had demonstrated the importance of country programmes to both donor and recipient Governments. The Board's discussions on emergency operations and strategies and on follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and on decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council had proven the importance of coordination to UNICEF. The Board had made a good start in ensuring that UNICEF continued to work as closely as possible with its allies.

130. The Board concluded its work of the second regular session on 25 January, one day ahead of schedule.

III. DECISIONS ADOPTED

1996/1. UNICEF mission statement

The Executive Board

Adopts the following statement on the mission of UNICEF, as contained in document E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.2:

THE MISSION OF UNICEF

UNICEF is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.

UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strives to establish children's rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children.

UNICEF insists that the survival, protection and development of children are universal development imperatives that are integral to human progress.

UNICEF mobilizes political will and material resources to help countries, particularly developing countries, ensure a "first call for children" and to build their capacity to form appropriate policies and deliver services for children and their families.

UNICEF is committed to ensuring special protection for the most disadvantaged children - victims of war, disasters, extreme poverty, all forms of violence and exploitation and those with disabilities.

UNICEF responds in emergencies to protect the rights of children. In coordination with United Nations partners and humanitarian agencies, UNICEF makes its unique facilities for rapid response available to its partners to relieve the suffering of children and those who provide their care.

UNICEF is non-partisan and its cooperation is free of discrimination. In everything it does, the most disadvantaged children and the countries in greatest need have priority.

UNICEF aims, through its country programmes, to promote the equal rights of women and girls and to support their full participation in the political, social and economic development of their communities.

UNICEF works with all its partners towards the attainment of the sustainable human development goals adopted by the world community and the realization of the vision of peace and social progress enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

First regular session
22 January 1996

1996/2. UNICEF emergency services: mission and strategies

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the information contained in the report on UNICEF emergency services: mission and strategies (E/ICEF/1996/4) presented to the Board at its first regular session of 1996;

2. Requests the secretariat to present a conceptual framework, including guiding principles and methodologies, for UNICEF emergency interventions (two pages) to be presented to the Board at its annual session of 1996;

3. Requests further the secretariat to formulate operational papers (two pages) on a number of issues, as listed in the annex to the present decision, to be presented for information, when completed, to relevant sessions of the Board during the period from 1996 to 1997;

4. Urges UNICEF, in close cooperation with the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) and other relevant agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, to facilitate the implementation of Economic and Social Council decision 1995/56, inter alia, through coordinated reporting to the 1996 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council.

Annex

SUBJECTS OF OPERATIONAL PAPERS TO BE PREPARED DURING 1996-1997

As a complement to the indicative list presented with Economic and Social Council decision 1995/56: Strengthening of the Coordination of the Emergency Humanitarian Assistance of the United Nations, adopted by the Council at its substantive session of 1995, the following operational papers will be considered:

1. Rapid response capacity;

2. Capacity-building;

3. Coordination:

   (a) Coordination at field level;

   (b) Inter-agency coordination and DHA;

4. Niche and comparative advantage;

5. Prevention and preparedness (including conflict prevention);

6. Protection of children in conflict situations;

7. Processes:

   (a) How is an emergency defined?;

   (b) When is an emergency declared?;

(c) Post-crisis recovery and development;

(d) How are funds reprogrammed/allocated?;

8. Balance between long-term development and emergency assistance.

First regular session
24 January 1996

1996/3. Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women

The Executive Board

1. Reaffirms that UNICEF follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women should be based on policies in, inter alia, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (E/ICEF/1994/L.5 and Add.1), policy review papers on basic education (E/ICEF/1995/16) and the health strategy for UNICEF (E/ICEF/1995/11/Rev.1), UNICEF follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development (E/ICEF/1995/12/Rev.1), and UNICEF policy on family planning (E/ICEF/1993/5), safe motherhood (E/ICEF/1990/L.13) and prevention of HIV/AIDS (E/ICEF/1992/L.11);

2. Endorses the framework for follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women as presented in document E/ICEF/1996/3, and taking into account the comments made by Board members and the explanations provided by the secretariat, emphasizing priorities in advocacy and programming to girls' education, health of the girl child, adolescent girls and women, and children's and women's rights;

3. Encourages UNICEF to strengthen its partnerships, coordination and collaboration with all agencies and entities of the United Nations system, each according to its mandate and to its own comparative advantage, and non-governmental organizations which are actively involved in the implementation of the Platform for Action of the Conference;

4. Requests the Executive Director to report to the Executive Board in 1997 on the process undertaken to integrate the Beijing Platform for Action in UNICEF country programmes, taking into account the United Nations commitment to an integrated follow-up of United Nations conferences.

First regular session
25 January 1996

1996/4. Reports to the Executive Board

The Executive Board

Takes note of the following reports:

(a) "Follow-up to the decisions taken by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1995" (E/ICEF/1996/6);

(b) "The fiftieth anniversary of UNICEF" (E/ICEF/1996/5);

(c) "Progress report on the audit of the Kenya country office" (E/ICEF/1996/AB/L.1).

First regular session
25 January 1996

1996/5. Documentation

The Executive Board

1. Takes into account the recent decision 96/06 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund (UNDP/UNFPA);

2. Recalls the importance of strict observance of the resolutions and rules establishing language arrangements for the different bodies and organs of the United Nations, in particular General Assembly resolution 50/11;

3. Requests the Executive Director of UNICEF to collaborate closely with the working group on document distribution issues, to be established by and together with the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Director of UNFPA, with the participation of the departments concerned and in association with representatives of the linguistic groups;

4. Requests the Executive Director to submit a report to the Executive Board at its annual session in 1996 on the status of this issue and to propose concrete solutions.

First regular session
25 January 1996

1996/6. Documents for future Executive Board sessions

The Executive Board

1. Decides to discontinue the following documents:

(a) "Reduction of outstanding balances through savings or cancellations and funds to cover overexpenditures on approved projects";

(b) "Report on the use of general resources for projects approved for supplementary funding";

(c) "Review of expenditures in excess of commitments and unspent commitments for completed projects financed by supplementary funds";

2. Decides further to defer consideration of the following reports to the third regular session of 1996:

(a) A report on implementation of the health strategy for UNICEF (decision 1995/28);

(b) All issues relating to the follow-up exercise to the management review of the Greeting Card and related Operations, including those identified in decisions 1995/20 and 1995/25.

First regular session
25 January 1996